CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus comprising:

(A) means for receiving at least one info segment, each info segment including,

(1) a content identifier, and

(2) a plurality of ad entries, each ad entry having,

(a) an interruption point specifier;

(B) an info segment store adapted to store the at least one info segment;

(C) means for receiving from a receiver an info segment request which includes a program identification of a program which the receiver is to display;

(D) means for locating one of the info segments whose content identifier matches the program identification; and

(E) means for sending the one info segment to the receiver.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has:

(b) a maximum interruption length specifier.

3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has:

(c) a resume indicator.

4. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has:

(d) a prohibited ad type specifier.

5. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has:

(e) a permitted ad type specifier.

6. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has:

(f) an ad lock specifier.

7. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein:

at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has,

(b) a maximum interruption length specifier;

at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has,

(c) a resume indicator;

at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has,

(d) a prohibited ad type specifier;

at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has,

(e) a permitted ad type specifier; and

at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has,

(f) an ad lock specifier.

8. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:

means for generating an info segment.

9. An apparatus comprising:

(A) an info segment store adapted to store at least one info segment, each info segment including,

(1) a content identifier, and

(2) at least one ad entry, each ad entry having,

(a) an interruption point specifier;

(B) an electronic programming guide store adapted to store at least one EPG entry each describing a predetermined program and having a program identification;

(C) means for receiving from a receiver an EPG request which includes a program identification of a program which the receiver is to display;

(D) means for locating an EPG entry and an info segment whose content identifiers match the program identification of the EPG request; and

(E) means for sending the located EPG entry and info segment to the receiver.

10.   The apparatus of claim 9 wherein:

at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has,

(b) a maximum interruption length specifier;

at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has,

(c) a resume indicator;

at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has,

(d) a prohibited ad type specifier;

at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has,

(e) a permitted ad type specifier; and

at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further has,

(f) an ad lock specifier.

11.   An apparatus comprising:

(A) a content store adapted to store at least one content item;

(B) an info segment store adapted to store at least one info segment, each info segment including,

(1) a content identifier, and

(2) at least one ad entry, each ad entry having,

(a) an interruption point specifier;

(C) means for receiving from a receiver a program request which includes a program identification of a program which the receiver is to display;

(D) means for retrieving a content item from the content store and an info segment from the info segment store, which content item and info segment match an identification of the requested program; and

(E) means for sending the retrieved content item and the retrieved info segment to the receiver.

12.   The apparatus of claim 11 wherein at least one ad entry of at least one of the info segments further comprises one or more specifiers selected from the group comprising:

(b) a maximum interruption length specifier;

(c) a resume indication specifier;

(d) a prohibited ad type specifier;

(e) a permitted ad type specifier; and

5   (f) an ad lock specifier.

13.   A method of creating an info segment for a first content item, the method comprising:

inserting a content identifier which associates the info segment with the content item; and

inserting at least one entry, each entry including,

10   an insertion point specifier which specifies a point at which, during play of the first

content item, play of the first content item should be interrupted and a second content should be

played.

14.   The method of claim 13 further comprising:

inserting a plurality of such entries.

15.   The method of claim 13 wherein in the inserting at least one entry, each entry further

includes:

a specifier prohibiting insertion of a specified type of second content item.

16.   The method of claim 15 wherein the specifier prohibits insertion of second content item

based a characteristic of the second content item selected from the group comprising:

language content of the second content item;

sexual content of the second content item;

25   violence content of the second content item; and

product type advertised in the second content item.

17.   The method of claim 13 wherein in the inserting at least one entry, each entry further

includes:

30   a specifier permitting insertion of a specified type of second content item.

18.   The method of claim 13 wherein:

the content identifier is null and the info segment is implicitly associated with the first content item; and

the info segment includes a plurality of entries.

19.   The method of claim 13 wherein second content items are advertisements, and each of the at least one entry further includes:

a maximum interruption length specifier which prevents an advertisement from interrupting the first content item for more than a specified amount of time;

an ad type specifier which controls which prevents an advertisement from interrupting the first content item if the advertisement is of a prohibited type; and

an ad lock specifier which enables the advertisement to be skipped if a criterion is met.

20.   The method of claim 19 wherein the criterion is the first content item having been purchased rather than rented.

21.   The method of claim 13 wherein each entry further includes:

a resume indicator which permits a user to abort the second content item and return to the first content item.

22.   A method comprising:

(A) storing a plurality of info segments, each info segment including,

(1) a content identifier associating the info segment with a predetermined content item,

(2) a plurality of ad entries, each ad entry including,

(a) an interrupt point specifier, indicating an interruption point during the predetermined content item at which play of the predetermined content item should be interrupted and an advertisement should be played;

(B) receiving a request for an info segment associated with a specified content item; and

(C) providing the info segment associated with the specified content item.

23.   The method of claim 22 wherein each ad entry further includes:

                (b) an ad type specifier which prevents ads having a predetermined characteristic from being played at the interruption point.

24.   The method of claim 23 wherein the content identifier is null and the info segment is implicitly associated with the predetermined content item.

25.   The method of claim 23 wherein each ad entry further includes:

                (c) an ad lock specifier which enables the interruption point to be skipped.

26.   The method of claim 25 wherein each ad entry further includes:

                (d) a maximum interruption length specifier which enables the advertisement to be prematurely terminated if the advertisement is too long.